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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000017

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SE NATSIOS AND IO A/S
SILVERBERG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

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SUBJECT: UN LIGHT PACKAGE IN DARFUR NEEDS AN ENERGIZER

Classified By: CDA C. Hume, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: A January 3 visit to El Fasher revealed numerous problems with the initial deployment of the UN light package. As reported septel, the small initial UN military contingent has yet to be integrated with the AMIS peace-keeping force. The UN police contingent is trying to define a role for itself in improving management of AU police monitors. However, the UN has dropped the ball on leadership and management: it has not recruited more than half the staff for the light package, and it cannot deploy more than 35 to El Fasher because it lacks accommodations; it has yet to resolve important issues regarding the standards for physical security that it will insist on in all installations; it most recent time-line for deployments is already three months out of date, and it has no concrete plan in place for deployment of the heavy package. This message recommends several steps that should be taken immediately. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Cease-fire: On January 3 CDA Hume met with AMIS force commander Aprezi to discuss his efforts to restart work of the cease-fire commission, next scheduled to meet on January 8 in El Fasher. Aprezi said he had traveled to a remote location in North Darfur to meet with over a hundred rebel leaders a week earlier. They confirmed their earlier public statement that AMIS forces should not be attacked and agreed to respect a cease-fire. Aprezi, taking advantage of their newly declared support for a cease-fire, came back to El Fasher ready to push ahead to implement the two chamber solution for the cease-fire commission (one chamber for the two DPA signatories; the second for all forces on the ground willing to cooperate in maintaining a cease-fire).

¶3. (C) The day after Aprezi's meeting, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) bombed the meeting site. Although the African Union had previously approved this arrangement, the SAF has now told Aprezi that it will not attend meetings with non-signatories. Aprezi intends to go ahead with the cease-fire commission meeting planned for January 8 regardless, intending to put pressure on the SAF to cooperate. S/CRS poloff will attend the January 8 meeting as U.S. rep.

¶4. (C) AMIS/UN Cooperation: Aprezi avoided answering CDA's questions regarding plans for cooperation between AMIS and the UN. In a previous meeting, UN staff had told the CDA that Aprezi insisted that the UN military be in separate offices and not collocated with AMIS.

¶5. (C) Light Package: On January 3 CDA Hume also met with a UN team for a briefing on deployment of light package. As described by UN staff in El Fasher, the full light package

will include 105 military staff and 80 civilian staff (rather than the 105 total mentioned earlier by UN staff in Khartoum). The UN sent to El Fasher a first group of 49 (15 military, 19 civpol, 4 coordination officers, and 11 support staff), but of this first group 15 returned to Khartoum the same afternoon because of inadequate accommodations in El Fasher. The UN briefers presented a time-line for deployment that had not been updated since October, and they had no/no answer to when the full light package could be deployed. They "hoped" by the end of February. They said that the Sudanese government had not impeded the deployment in any way.

¶6. (C) Follow-up questions revealed disarray and lack of leadership on the UN side. Among the problems that surfaced: 1) Only half of the personnel for the light support package have been recruited so far, and some staff were pulled back by their governments at the last moment (Norway, Germany). 2) The UN has recently changed its physical security requirements for offices and accommodations, and co-location of military staff inside the security perimeter of AMIS HQ is not an option. Outside the AMIS force HQ in El Fasher construction on UN offices has stopped on the prepared site, although it is surrounded by concertina wire and the containers are in place, while the UN determines if HESCO barriers are required. Nor has the UN requested Sudanese government authorization for installing top level security arrangements at the agricultural college site it has selected for long-term use. No additional deployments will take place without required security being put in place. 3) In addition to having no SRSG in place in Khartoum, the operation in El Fasher (previously headed by a senior officer in charge), lacks leadership. The current officer in charge is a refugee protection officer without adequate experience to stand up the light package, let alone the heavy package.

KHARTOUM 00000017 002 OF 002

¶7. (C) Heavy Package: UN staff (which included the officer in charge, the senior admin officer, and the commanders of the police and military contingents) said they had no information on plans for the heavy package, which they said was under further discussion in Addis with AU officials. Given the inevitable lead time required for any deployment in Darfur (approximately four months to construct a company-sized based camp), under the most favorable circumstances the UN cannot begin to deploy the heavy package until May. However, if/if the UN insists on the top level of physical security at all locations, even that schedule would be in doubt.

¶8. (C) Recommendations to expedite deployment of light and heavy packages: 1) the UN needs senior, proven leadership on the ground in El Fasher, as well as in Khartoum. 2) If the UN packages are to improve AMIS operations rather than merely observe AMIS problems, the UN needs to send the complete light package with competent staff ASAP. In this regard, the USG should urge NATO allies to make personnel available. 3) To resolve contracting issues that are causing delays in providing accommodations and office facilities, the UN, the USG, and the PAE contractors should cut through the red-tape and security questions. One way to do this would be to send to El Fasher as soon as possible a mission of officials from State (AF and IO), the UN (DPKO and Security), and PAE who can make decisions and commitments on the spot.

HUME